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Message Text

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11
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W
---------- 082533
O R 110928Z AUG 76
FM AMEMBASSY BONN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1019
INFO USMISSION USBERLIN
USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY BERLIN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BONN 13394

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV PFOR US UK FR UR GW GE
SUBJECT: SOVIET PROPOSAL FOR EXCHANGE OF TELEGRAMS ON QA ANNIVERSARY

REFS: (A) STATE 193366; (B) BONN 13009; (C) STATE 185023

SUMMARY. THE RESULTS OF AN AUGUST 10 BONN GROUP DISCUSSION OF THE SOVIET PROPOSAL TO EXCHANGE MESSAGES ON QA FIFTH ANNIVERSARY ARE GIVEN BELOW. BRITISH AND GERMANS NOW OPPOSE EXCHANGE WHILE FRENCH REP BELIEVES PARIS STILL WOULD LIKE TO TO AHEAD. END SUMMARY.

1. FOLLOWING ARE THE POSITIONS TAKEN BY THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE AUGUST 10 BONN GROUP MEETING:

-- BRITISH POSITION: LONDON WISHES TO KILL THE IDEA. THE FCO SEES THE SOVIET PROPOSAL AS PART OF CAMPAIGN TO FREEZE BERLIN WITHIN THE MOST RESTRICTIVE POSSIBLE INTERPRETATION OF QA, TO ELEVATE THE AGREEMENT ABOVE ITS TRUE AUTHORITY, AND THUS TO IGNORE OR SUBMERGE
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THE EARLIER QUADRIPARTITE AGREEMENTS, DECISIONS, AND

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PRACTICES WHICH LIE BEHIND THE QA AND ARE AT MOST CONFIRMED IN IT. IT WOULD BE VERY DIFFICULT TO EXCHANGE MESSAGES NOW IN VIEW OF SERIOUS PROBLEMS, INCLUDING SOVIET PROTEST ON EC PARLIAMENT DIRECT ELECTIONS AND EVENTS ON INNER-GERMAN BORDER. ALLIES SHOULD NOT LOOK FOR EXCUSES IN TELLING SOVIETS "NO," THEY SHOULD SIMPLY SAY WE SEE NO ADVANTAGE IN IT. REPLY TO SOVIETS MUST BE GIVEN VERY SOON.

-- FRG POSITION: UK POSITION HAS CREATED A NEW SITUATION WHICH HAS OVERTAKEN THE FRG PRELIMINARY VIEW (SEE PARA 2, REF B). THE "NO OBJECTION" POSITION HAD BEEN BASED ON FRG BELIEF THAT AN EXCHANGE WAS INEVITABLE. BONN AGREES WITH LONDON THAT NO EXCHANGE SHOULD TAKE PLACE. IF IT DID, FRG WOULD PROBABLY HAVE TO MAKE PUBLIC STATEMENT WHICH WOULD NOTE POSITIVE ASPECTS OF QA BUT ALSO NOTE LACK OF COMPLETE IMPLEMENTATION BY THE OTHER SIDE, ALONG THE LINES OF THE OSLO COMMUNIQUE. WAY TO BREAK NEGATIVE REPLY TO SOVIETS IS TO SAY THAT EXCHANGE OF MESSAGES WOULD BECOME PART OF FRG ELECTION CAMPAIGN, THUS LEADING TO ESCALATION OF THE SITUATION WHICH IS IN NOBODY'S INTEREST.

-- FRENCH POSITION: ALL INSTRUCTIONS FROM PARIS HAVE DEALT ONLY WITH QUESTION OF HOW AN EXCHANGE COULD TAKE PLACE. FRENCH HERE THUS ASSUME PARIS DESIRES THAT SOVIET PROPOSAL BE ACCEPTED, ON CONDITION THAT ACCEPTABLE TEXTS CAN BE COORDINATED.

-- US REP RECALLED DEPARTMENT'S INSTRUCTION THAT US FINAL DECISION WILL BE BASED ON THE CONSENSUS REACHED

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 BONN 13394

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IN THE BONN GROUP (PARA 4, REF C), AND REPORTED THE INSTRUCTIONS ON MODALITIES CONTAINED IN REF (A) FOR USE IF EXCHANGE DOES TAKE PLACE.

-- ALL REPS AGREED THAT ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE WAS RAPIDLY NEEDED FROM NATIONAL AUTHORITIES. A BONN GROUP MEETING WAS TENTATIVELY SCHEDULED FOR AUGUST 13 TO CONSIDER FURTHER THE SOVIET PROPOSAL.

2. COMMENT: RECENT INCIDENTS ON THE INNER-GERMAN BORDER HAVE CHANGED THE ATMOSPHERE HERE REGARDING FRG-SOVIET AND FRG-GDR RELATIONS. THE GOVERNMENT, AND PARTICULARLY THE FOREIGN MINISTER, HAVE PROTECTED THEMSELVES AGAINST THE OPPOSITION BY TAKING A GENERALLY TOUGH LINE ALTHOUGH WE PERCEIVE SIGNS THAT THEY -- LIKE THE OTHER SIDE -- ARE NOW ATTEMPTING TO BACK AWAY FROM A CONFRONTATION. UNDER THOSE CIRCUMSTANCES, WE MUST RECOGNIZE THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE FOUR POWER EXCHANGE OF MESSAGES COULD BECOME MORE CONTROVERSIAL THAN WE ORIGINALLY BELIEVED, AND THAT IT COULD INDEED PROVOKE SOME KIND OF PROTECTIVE REACTION FROM THE GOVERNMENT. MUCH DEPENDS ON THE WAY THE MOOD DEVELOPES OVER THE CONFIDENTIAL

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NEXT WEEK OR TWO, BUT IT WILL BE DIFFICULT TO ERASE THE MEMORY OF THE TWO BORDER KILLINGS VERY QUICKLY. THIS MAY COMPEL SOME ALLIED OR GERMAN STATEMENT THAT WILL BE HARDER THAN WE HAD ORIGINALLY INTENDED AND THAT MAY NOT PRODUCE THE IMPACT THAT WE OR THE SOVIETS HAD WISHED IN THE FIRST PLACE. ON THE OTHER HAND, OF COURSE, WE ARE UNABLE TO JUDGE HERE SOME OF THE CONSIDERATIONS THAT MAY HAVE LED TO OUR ORIGINAL POSITION.

3. REQUEST GUIDANCE, IF POSSIBLE BY OPENING OF BUSINESS HERE AUGUST 13.
HILLENBRAND

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